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Beyond the Good Muslim Woman: Humour, Anger, and Ethical Becoming in Diasporic Fiction

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Abstract
This article examines how Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home* dismantle the figure of the "Good Muslim Woman" by foregrounding humour and anger as modes of ethical self-formation. Moving beyond dominant critical frameworks that read Muslim women's writing primarily through identity politics, resistance, or Islamophobia, the article situates these novels within the ethical and post-secular turn in literary studies. Drawing on theories of ethical selfhood and ordinary ethics, it argues that Kahf and Jarrar construct diasporic coming-of-age narratives in which Muslim female subjectivity is shaped not through idealized piety or liberal emancipation, but through affective engagement, moral imperfection, and everyday ethical struggle. In Kahf's novel, humour functions as a reflective ethical practice that enables critique without moral foreclosure, while Jarrar's irreverent narrative mobilizes anger as an ethical refusal of respectability and normative coherence. Read together, these texts reframe diasporic Muslim women's fiction as a site of ethical experimentation, challenging reductive binaries of piety and rebellion and offering a post-secular model of ethical becoming grounded in lived experience.

Keywords:
Diasporic Muslim women's fiction; ethical selfhood; post-secular literature; humour and anger; Muslim female subjectivity; ordinary ethics; coming-of-age narratives

1. Introduction

Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home*, are examined to see how they deconstruct the *Good Muslim Woman* by using both humour and anger as forms of ethical self-making. This work moves beyond the typical identity politics, resistance and Islamophobia frameworks that have been used to study Muslim women writers' works. Instead, this work frames the novels in the context of the post-secular and ethical turns in literature theory. Using the framework of the ethical self (and ordinary ethics), it is argued that Kahf and Jarrar create diasporic coming of age stories where Muslim female subjectivities are formed from affective relationships, moral flaws, and daily struggles with ethics. Humour, for Kahf, serves as an ethical reflection that allows for criticism without closing off the possibility of moral action; anger, for Jarrar, creates an ethical refusal of respectable and coherent norms. Together, these two texts frame diasporic Muslim women's fiction as a space for ethical experimentation, creating a post-secular model for ethical growth based on lived experience.

Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), and Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home* (2007), intentionally break down the *Good Muslim Woman* because they show humour, anger, and moral chaos as important parts of a Muslim female coming-of-age in the diaspora. Both novels describe faith as something that does not provide a clear moral compass, but rather it shapes the way a person thinks about being ethically responsible; they see ethical responsibility as a constant process of emotion, doubt, and daily moral struggles.

Therefore, Kahf and Jarrar are able to avoid the expectations of Western secularism to be liberated, and the expectation of their own communities to be respectable; they create instead complex portraits of Muslim women who are neither exemplary nor redeemed, but who are ethically involved.

Current research on Kahf and Jarrar emphasizes many of the same issues that have become common in current research on Muslim diasporic writing: hybridity, cultural conflict, trauma and resistance. Kahf's works are most often referenced to hijab politics and Muslim identity development, while Jarrar's works are often referenced in terms of anger, sexuality, and exile. One area of study that has not received adequate study is how humour and anger serve not only as narrative devices and modes of expression but also as mechanisms through which diasporic Muslim women establish accountability, a sense of belonging, and moral agency.

The lack of exploration of the role of humour and anger in establishing moral agency and accountability in the lives of diasporic Muslim women reflects a larger trend in critical studies of Muslim women's writing. Most scholarship on Muslim women's writing has approached the topic through a representational politics paradigm (e.g., visibility, resistance, etc.) rather than through a post-secular paradigm of lived religion and ethics.

Through the application of the post-secular paradigm of lived religion and ethics, this paper will reconceptualize Kahf and Jarrar's works as works of ethical becoming rather than as resolutions of identity.

By exploring how humour functions in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* as a form of moral reflexivity and how anger serves as a rejection of respectability politics that creates a new kind of accountability in *A Map of Home*, this paper illustrates that both novels refuse the normative construction of Muslim femininity and illustrate that ethical subjectivity can be seen as messy, non-linear, and rooted in the everyday experiences of people.

Together, Kahf and Jarrar expand our understanding of the diasporic fiction of Muslim women in terms of the boundaries of piety and rebellion. Therefore, this paper provides a new frame of reference for the study of Muslim women's diasporic fiction by reframing Muslim women's diasporic fiction as a site of experimental ethics based on affect, imperfection, and the ordinary moral labour of people.

2. Critical Context and Literature Review

2.1 Research on Muslim Women's Diasporic Writing: Research on Muslim women's diasporic writing has been influenced mainly by post-colonial and cultural studies' frames of reference. Such research has primarily addressed questions of identity, representation and power. One of the main concepts used to analyse how Muslim women writers navigate cultural in-betweenness, diasporic displacement and the tension between inherited tradition and Western modernity has been Bhabha's idea of hybridity. Through the lens of hybridity, Muslim female protagonists have often been depicted as inhabitants of a third space, allowing them to resist both Orientalist stereotypes and patriarchal cultural norms. These readings have had some success in contesting the essentialist representations of Muslim women, yet such readings have often reduced complex narrative subjectivities to symbolic positions within cultural discourse. Alongside hybridity, there has been a strong line of critical inquiry into Islamophobia and representational politics especially since 9/11. Muslim women's texts have been interpreted as counter-discursive interventions aiming to correct Western misrepresentations of Islam and Muslim femininity. Related to this approach are studies that centre around veiling and visibility. These studies treat the hijab as a key semiotic marker through which questions of agency, oppression, and resistance are debated. While these frameworks have helped to dislodge overly simplistic interpretations of Muslim women, they limit the range of possible readings by focusing primarily on Muslim women as cultural symbols rather than as ethically complex individuals immersed in the everyday moral world.

These frameworks have proven to be particularly limiting when applied to writers like Mohja Kahf and Randa Jarrar, whose narrative strategies cannot be contained within identity-based or representational paradigms. Kahf and Jarrar repeatedly present in their texts the complexities of emotional excess, contradiction, humour, and ethical uncertainty all of which do not lend themselves well to frameworks centred on visibility, resistance, or hybridity.

As a result, much of the critical literature on Kahf and Jarrar currently available tends to ignore the ways in which moral struggle and ethical deliberation occur at the level of everyday life in their narratives.

2.2 Current Critical Understandings of Kahf and Jarrar : Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* has primarily been critically understood through the lenses of hijab politics, Muslim identity development, and critiques of community within the American diaspora. Scholars have studied Kahf's satiric portrayals of mosque culture, generational conflict, and racialized belonging as a mechanism to develop Muslim American subjectivity. While these studies acknowledge Kahf's employment of humour and irony as rhetorical tools for cultural critique, they rarely conceptualize these elements as forms of ethical practice through which her protagonist establishes moral accountability, faith, and self-formulation. Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home*, on the other hand, has been understood primarily through the lenses of trauma, sexuality, anger, and exile. Criticism of Jarrar's novel has primarily focused on its chaotic narrative, its use of profanity, and its rejection of normative femininity as acts of resistance against patriarchal and colonial constraints. Jarrar's protagonist has often been represented as a figure of excess whose rage and irreverence disrupts the expectations of Muslim womanhood. While such readings conceptualize anger and disorder as purely oppositional emotions, they fail to recognize how these emotions also function as locations of ethical engagement and moral reckoning. While Kahf and Jarrar appear to differ greatly in terms of their tone and style of narration, they are rarely placed into a sustained comparative analysis, and they are rarely examined through an ethical theory perspective. Therefore, existing criticism continues to focus heavily on politically or representatively framed readings of these authors and leaves unexamined the ways in which these authors think of ethical selfhood outside of the parameters of piety, respectability, or liberal emancipation.

The critical gap that this article addresses in contemporary scholarship is the lack of comparative studies that connect affect (and specifically humour and anger) to ethical self-formation in Muslim women's diasporic fiction. Recent developments in anthropology and religion studies have contributed to developing the

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idea of ethical selfhood and ordinary ethics, however, those concepts have not been applied in a comprehensive way in literary critiques of Muslim women's writing. As a result, there is a lack of study of post-secular Muslim subjectivity (as developed through living practice, emotional struggles, and moral imperfection) that has limited our understanding of how faith functions outside of symbolic or oppositional terms.

Through the comparative study of Kahf and Jarrar, this article addresses this gap and develops a new analytical lens that places ethical becoming at the centre of a non-linear and affective process. Through this, it goes beyond the dominant paradigms of identity politics and resistance to demonstrate how diasporic Muslim women's fiction represents forms of moral agency based on ordinary experiences rather than idealized notions of the good Muslim woman.

3. Theoretical Lens: Ethical Selfhood and Ordinary Ethics: This article is based on the ethical turn in the humanities, a critical reorientation that has occurred in response to the perceived limitations of discourse- and identity-based analyses. Earlier post-structuralist and post-colonial methods were productive in revealing the operation of power in representation, but left under-examined how subjects actively participate in moral questions as they occur in everyday life. The ethical turn fills this gap by positioning moral agency as a situated, relational, and on-going process of self-formation, rather than as a universal norm or prescriptive code. The focus of ethics as lived practice shaped through habit, affect, discipline, and reflection rather than abstract principles or ideologies, enables a reconceptualization of narrative subjectivity for literary studies.

Characters are no longer viewed as primarily representative of cultural identity or resistance, but as ethically negotiating subjects whose actions, emotions, and contradictions represent moral inquiry. The process of testing and revising ethical life occurs in fiction, and often in ways that resist closure or resolution. This theoretical orientation is especially appropriate for reading diasporic Muslim women's writing, which frequently depicts the ethical struggles of individuals navigating their faith, migration, gender, and everyday social constraints.

A central component of this theoretical framework is Saba Mahmood's critique of liberal conceptions of agency. In *Politics of Piety*, Mahmood critiques the presumption that agency must take the form of resistance to power or tradition, and instead positions ethical selfhood as being cultivated through embodied practices such as discipline, repetition, and habit *(Mahmood 14–15)*. Agency, in this sense, involves the ability to inhabit norms reflectively, rather than simply to reject them *(Mahmood 22)*. Through the application of Mahmood's framework to diasporic Muslim women's fiction, faith can be positioned as an ethical practice, rather than as a static identity marker or as a sign of ideological conformity. The presence of doubt, failure, or inconsistency should not indicate ethical vacancy, but rather indicate the on-going labour of moral self-formation.

Talal Asad's development of the concept of tradition provides further depth to this perspective by locating the process of ethical becoming within historically and socially contextualized forms of life (Asad 27–29). Asad rejects the secular/liberal distinction between belief and practice, and emphasizes how sensibilities, affects, and bodily disciplines are formed through participation in tradition. Asad's conception of tradition as contested, pedagogical and open to revision as a site in which ethical norms are learned, challenged and re-articulated provides a framework for viewing ethical struggle as a form of continuity in diasporic contexts where religious practices are re-configured in the face of displacement and minority status.

Ethical uncertainty therefore is a component of moral formation, rather than an indication of religious failure. While Mahmood and Asad provide the conceptual foundation for understanding ethical formation within Islamic traditions, Michael Lambek's development of the concept of ordinary ethics draws attention to the everyday scale of ethical life. Lambek asserts that ethical judgment is not restricted to exceptional moral dilemmas or explicit ethical deliberation, but is embedded in the everyday interactions, emotional responses, and habitual choices of individuals (Lambek 2–3). Ethical life, in this sense, is often tacit, provisional, and context dependent. For literary analysis, this approach legitimates the consideration of seemingly minor events - jokes, outbursts, silences, hesitations- that illustrate how characters construct responsibility and relationality. Humour and anger, rather than being seen as excessive or stylistic elements of narrative, become important sites of ethical expression.

Finally, Sara Ahmed's work on affect and feminist refusal adds further nuance to this analysis, by providing a theory of how emotions function within structures of power and normativity (Ahmed 174–176). Ahmed disputes the pathological characterization of anger, particularly in feminist and racialized contexts, by portraying anger as a response to injustice that reveals the moral limits of respectability and social consensus. Anger, in Ahmed's account, is not merely reactive but world making: it reorients subjects towards what they refuse to accept and what they demand accountability for. In the case of diasporic Muslim women's fiction, anger can be seen as an ethical stance that contests both Western expectations of grateful assimilation and internal communal pressures for moral restraint.

Together, these theoretical orientations provide a definition of ethics that differs significantly from moral idealism, coherence, or exemplary piety. Ethics, as discussed in this article, is not a state of moral completeness, but an on-going process of ethical becoming, a non-linear, affective, and everyday practice. Ethical becoming recognizes contradiction, emotional excess and imperfection as integral to moral life, rather than as deviations from it. This lens allows for the interpretation of Kahf's and Jarrar's protagonists as ethically engaged subjects whose humour and anger do not solely indicate moral failure or rebellion, but are examples of how individuals ethically negotiate the lived complexities of diasporic Muslim existence.

4. Humor as Ethical Practice in The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf

4.1 Satire, Irony, and Community Critique: In The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf, Kahf employs humour and irony not only for comedic effect, but also to portray the complex ethical terrain of diasporic Muslim life in which cultural expectations and prejudices intersect. Khadra's comments and reactions to situations that she encounters often exist in a satirical mode e.g., she calls a local Muslim student organization a "den of iniquities" and laughs at its absurdity, illustrating the ways in which community norms often mimic the same kinds of judgments they seek to avoid, leading Khadra to examine moral categories in a more nuanced fashion than she would if she were to passively accept them.

Humour here is an example of an ethical self-reflection: Khadra's laughter at the social absurdity she sees is a profoundly moral act, she is ridiculing hypocrisy, while maintaining her commitment to her faith and to her integrity. Thus, humour is a means by which Khadra negotiates the moral boundaries of her world, rather than avoiding them.

4.2 Imperfection and Faith; Kahf also illustrates the idea of moral imperfection as a necessary component of ethical becoming in her use of humour. The story follows Khadra's journey from a strict, prescriptive notion of faith to a more inclusive, lived experience of her spirituality. Although the story includes many serious and some painful moments such as her conflicted feelings about feeling at home in neither Indiana nor Mecca. Khadra's self-awareness and occasional light-heartedness in her thoughts allow her to continue pursuing her spiritual quest without the weight of self-judgment. For example, during the time when she feels unable to be fully accepted in either place and rejects the idea that there is one home her thoughts and doubts about this situation illustrate the contradictions of diasporic life that cannot be easily categorized.

This combination of sincere expressions of her faith and humorous reflections about the contradictions of her experience illustrate ethical flexibility: Khadra learns that faith requires no moral perfection, but a willingness to consider doubt, contradiction, and complexity in her identity all at once.

4.3 The Limits of Respectability : Humour is used by Kahf to demonstrate how the pursuit of an ideal Muslim woman image (respectability) may obscure the complexities of ethical life in diaspora. Through Khadra's responses to contradiction (her laughter), Kahf illustrates that the pursuit of respectability limits the ethical imagination, and therefore, an ideal way for an individual to live an ethical life is to have a humour that acknowledges imperfection (as opposed to suppressing it). Through the use of humour, the ethical strategies of survival, self-fashioning, and honesty are illustrated as being essential for individuals to maintain their spiritual engagement while avoiding the pitfalls of simplistic piety.

5. Anger, Disorder, and Ethical Being in A Map of Home

5.1 Anger as Ethical Awareness : Anger is used by Randa Jarrar in *A Map of Home* to create an ethical awareness in the reader. Unlike adolescent volatility or narrative excess, Jarrar uses anger as a means of highlighting the moral failures of the world inhabited by the protagonist, Nidali. As a result of the convergence of family authority, national displacement and gendered expectation, Nidali experiences intense feelings of anger that serve as ethical pressure points. Rather than leading the reader to a moral conclusion, the narrative insists on remaining within the ruptures of affect that Nidali's anger creates, indicating that ethical selfhood develops not through resolution or reconciliation, but through continuous confrontation with contradiction. Unlike other narratives, Nidali's many outbursts of anger (at parents, teachers and societal expectations) are not portrayed as unreasonable or immature. Instead, her anger represents the limits of endurance in the face of societal demands for obedience, gratitude, and silence. Therefore, anger serves as a form of ethical perception registering injustice prior to articulating that injustice using a stable moral vocabulary. Thus, Jarrar aligns affect with moral awareness, rejecting the liberal model of ethical development that associates moral maturation with the suppression of emotion. Through Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of feminist anger, Nidali's intense emotional expression can be seen as a reaction to the structural violence inherent in the normative expectations of happiness and respectability. Anger in this context, is not directed towards catharsis or resolution; it highlights what remains structurally unliveable (Ahmed 170–172). By continuing to allow anger to exist in the narrative without providing a corrective, Jarrar provides an alternative understanding of anger as a form of ethical truth-telling one that is resistant to both patriarchal disciplinary control and liberal expectations of self-control.

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5.2 Disrupting Respectability Politics : Jarrar's novel consistently disrupts the political of respectability by refusing to portray Nidali as morally exemplary, narratively cohesive, or emotionally contained. Profanity, sexual candour, and emotional explosiveness are not stylistic decisions made for shock value; they are essential to the ethical vision of the novel. Nidali's voice resists the expectation of Muslim women authors to express themselves in a manner that makes them legible through moral discipline or cultural decorum. Instead, Nidali's ethical development occurs through disconnection, discomfort, and excess. The rejection of respectability complicates dominant frameworks that interpret Muslim women's writing primarily through resistance or liberation. Nidali does not emerge as a liberated subject who has transcended tradition, nor as a morally redeemed subject who has resolved cultural contradictions. Instead, she remains ethically unsettled. The insistence of Nidali's voice is to give permission for her to speak from a place of disorder, making visible the labour of ethical self-fashioning without providing moral closure. Therefore, Jarrar challenges the liberal assumption that moral agency is developed through coherence, consistency, or progress. Nidali's ethical existence is not developed through self- improvement or moral completion; it is recursive, reactive and often unresolved. It is precisely this rejection of coherence that allows Nidali to develop her ethical relationship. By telling her own contradictions without apology, Nidali asserts her moral agency on terms that do not require respectability, piety, or assimilation.

5.3 Disorder as Ethical Education :A Map of Home further radicalizes ethical becoming by situating ethical education in disorder itself. Nidali's movement between Kuwait, Egypt, and the United States does not lead to ethical clarity or stable belonging. Instead, her migration creates a constant state of ethical improvisation. Each move forces Nidali into a space of ethical uncertainty, and each time she must navigate the ethical implications of the spaces she inhabits, without the promise of resolution. The structural arrangement of the narrative rejects the traditional Bildungsroman, which assumes that disorder is a temporary stage preceding moral or social integration. Jarrar rejects this teleology. Disorder is not something to be overcome but a condition of ethical life in diaspora. Ethical awareness is developed not after the chaos subsides, but in the midst of it. Ethical becoming in this framework is contingent, affective, and ongoing. Michael Lambek's concept of ordinary ethics is useful for understanding Nidali's ethical existence. Nidali's ethical existence is not articulated through explicit moral reasoning or ideological commitment, but through daily encounters, emotional reactions, and acts of refusal. Anger, shame, desire, and defiance become the site in which implicit rather than explicit ethical judgments are made. Jarrar's narrative presents ethics as a lived practice rather than an abstract principle. By leaving the process of developing an ethical existence unresolved, *A Map of Home* rejects both the didacticism of moral instruction and the redemptive quality of a narrative. Nidali does not reach a fixed point of moral identity; she remains ethically responsive. Disorder, rather than being indicative of failure, is the foundation upon which Nidali continues to imagine her ethical possibilities.

6. Humor and Anger: Two Different Modalities of Diasporic Subjectivity : Reading the two texts *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and *A Map of Home* side by side shows us that humour and anger are not the same affect. They are different ways that a diasporic female Muslim subjectivity develops. For example, Kahf's book uses humour (irony, satire, etc.) and Kahf's character Khadra is able to question the stereotypes that people have of her and the stereotypes she has of herself and her own community. Using humour is a form of being accountable to your own values and morals but still questioning those values and morals. That being said, using humour is not about detaching yourself from moral values, it is about showing a sense of humour about the fact that you can't always find the right answers. On the other hand, Jarrar's book uses anger and the anger that Jarrar's character Nidali feels used as a way of exposing the fact that there are many times when there is no way to reconcile the moral expectations placed upon you. Therefore, the anger Nidali expresses is not a way of seeking a moral solution but rather a way of expressing the moral inadequacy of the moral expectations of others.Both Kahf's and Jarrar's books reject the idea that ethical development happens in a linear fashion. In other words, Khadra and Nidali don't end up being good Muslims in some way and therefore can't be called good examples of what a Muslim woman should be. Instead, both characters' ethical development is on-going and is influenced by their everyday struggles and contradictions. Therefore, both authors show that developing as an individual involves struggling with contradiction, imperfection, and ambiguity and both authors see these aspects as essential to developing as an individual.Ultimately, reading the two books together shows how Kahf and Jarrar show how diasporic Muslim women's fiction disrupts the traditional binary of piety and rebellion that has been the foundation of much of the criticism of Muslim women's experiences and subjectivities. Therefore, humour and anger in Kahf and Jarrar are not about rejecting faith or about rejecting the possibility of faith and morality coexisting. Instead, the use of humour and anger in both books represents a post-secular vision of ethics where faith and doubt coexist and where emotions and emotional expression are important to developing as an individual.In addition to disrupting the binary of piety and rebellion, Kahf and Jarrar disrupt the idea of coming of age as a time of moral clarity and certainty and replace that with a vision of coming of age as a time of moral confusion and ambiguity. Ultimately, both authors disrupt the idea of the coming-of-age story as a means of teaching young readers how to become morally and ethically competent individuals and instead, both authors see the coming-of-age story as a means of providing a way for young readers to experiment with new forms of ethics and morality.

7. Reimagining the Coming-of-Age Story in Diasporic Muslim Women's Fiction: As demonstrated in this comparative study of Kahf and Jarrar, the ethical self is developed in diasporic Muslim women's narratives not through a linearity of moral development or through conformity to idealized forms of piety, but through an affective engagement with contradiction, imperfection, and lived experience. Additionally, as shown in this comparative study, humor in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and anger in *A Map of Home* provide complementary forms of moral and ethical negotiation and illustrate that ethical growth is never complete, but always occurs in a non-linear fashion and is always mediated by contradiction. Therefore, by depicting the everyday, the emotional, and the imperfect in their portrayals of coming of age, both Kahf and Jarrar challenge the conventional notion of the coming-of-age story that typically depicts a teleological moral or psychological outcome.Therefore, this comparative analysis suggests a rethinking of the Muslim female Bildungsroman in diaspora. Rather than illustrating a developmental trajectory that leads to a clearly defined ethical or spiritual arrival, both Kahf and Jarrar describe protagonists who develop in a continuous and recursive manner and whose development is deeply connected to the social, cultural, and religious contradictions that shape their lives. Thus, the Bildungsroman described in these works is not a depiction of moral perfection or of social integration, but rather a depiction of ethical development in motion: faith is questioned and practiced, humour and anger guide reflection and resistance, and identity is continuously negotiated in relation to the changing geographies and affective landscapes of the diasporic experience.Thus, these works offer a post-secular vision of adolescence and of ethical development that emphasizes lived moral labour as the foundation of moral and ethical development. Furthermore, by reconceiving the coming-of-age story as an ongoing and affective process of ethical development shaped by the contradictions and complexities of the diasporic experience, Kahf and Jarrar expand the possibilities of the Bildungsroman as a literary genre and demonstrate that moral and ethical insight can occur as a result of laughter, rage, mistakes, and contradiction.

8. Conclusion: Ethical Development Beyond the "Good Muslim Woman": This article argues that *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and *A Map of Home* deconstruct the notion of the "Good Muslim Woman" by reimagining Muslim female subjectivity as an ongoing process of ethical development, rather than as a state of moral coherence, piety, or liberal emancipation. Through the use of humour and anger - two affects often viewed as excessive narrative elements or emotional deviations from the expected moral comportment of the idealized bildungsroman heroine Mohja Kahf and Randa Jarrar develop forms of ethical engagement rooted in contradiction, imperfection, and the everyday moral struggles that are inherent in the diasporic experience. Therefore, both authors resist the demands of western secularism to create legible liberations and the internal communal pressures to create respectful and morally pure representations of Muslim women.Furthermore, by locating these works within the broader contexts of the ethical and post-secular turns in the humanities, this article positions diasporic Muslim women's fiction as a site of lived ethics rather than solely as a site of representational politics. In addition, Kahf's use of satire and irony provides a reflective moral critique of the external and internal expectations placed upon her protagonist, Khadra, and illustrates that humour is a form of ethical flexibility that maintains accountability in the midst of doubt and contradiction. Similarly, Jarrar's use of anger, profanity, and disorder as narrative forms of resistance to the expectations of others illustrate that anger can be an affective orientation to injustice and a means of recognizing oneself and telling the moral truth. Collectively, the two works illustrate that ethical subjectivity is not developed through moral resolution or exemplary moral behaviour, but through an affective engagement with the ongoing tensions of the diasporic experience.This comparative study offers a contribution to existing scholarship by extending the parameters of critical inquiry into the work of Muslim women writers beyond the oppositions of piety and rebellion, oppression and resistance, and secularism and faith. Furthermore, this study highlights the ways in which moral agency is developed through the everyday, through emotional expressions, and through the imperfect nature of decision-making processes, rather than through adherence to normative ideals of femininity or religiosity. Collectively, then, the two works offer a post-secular vision of Muslim female subjectivity that values the imperfections of the process of developing as an individual. This vision of subjectivity recognizes that the diasporic experience is characterized by contradiction, ambiguity, and the need to engage with the world in an effective manner.

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